

The Locked Chest
The Sweeps of Ninety-Eight

John Masefield



THE LOCKED CHEST

THE SWEEPS OF NINETY-EIGHT

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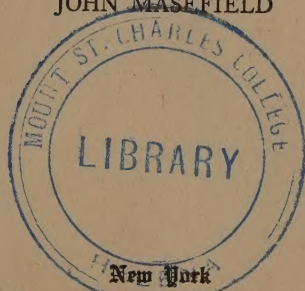


John Galsworthy

The Locked Chest
and
The Sweeps of Ninety-Eight

TWO ONE ACT PLAYS

BY
JOHN MASEFIELD



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1916

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THE LOCKED CHEST

A Play in One Act

(From a Tale in the Laxdaelasaga)

PERSONS

THORD GODDI	-	-	-	<i>A Farmer</i>
THOROLF	-	-	-	
INGIALD	-	-	-	<i>A Lord</i>
SOLDIERS	-	-	-	<i>Adherents of Ingiald</i>
VIGDIS GODDI	-	-	-	<i>Wife of Thord</i>

SCENE

Iceland

THE LOCKED CHEST

SCENE: *A room. A chest used as a bench.
A table, etc. VIGDIS embroidering a cloth.*

VIGDIS.

[*Singing.*]

My love is drowned in the Lowlands,
Away. Heigho.
My love is drowned in the Lowlands,
Lowlands no more.

[*Enter THORD GODDI*]

Well, Thord. I hope you had a good market.
[*Sings.*]

His hair is cold with the seaweed,
Away. Heigho.
His hair is cold with the seaweed,
Lowlands no more.

Come and sit down by the fire, won't you?
[*Sings.*]

O my love is drowned in the Lowlands,
Away——

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THORD.

For heaven's sake, stop it.

VIGDIS.

Stop what?

THORD.

That caterwauling.

VIGDIS.

Caterwauling?

THORD.

I'm not going to have that howling when
I've got a headache——

VIGDIS,

I'm sorry I sang when you had a head-
ache. I didn't know.

THORD.

I've always got a headache.

VIGDIS.

I'm sorry, Thord.

THORD.

O, don't "sorry" me. If you're so sorry

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as all that there'd have been a nice supper ready. But there. It's always the way.

VIGDIS.

Let me get you your supper.

THORD.

O, I don't want it now, thanks, I couldn't eat it. Why wasn't it ready for me, the moment I came in?

VIGDIS.

But, Thord. My dear man.

THORD.

How many more times am I to tell you I won't be "my deared" when I've a headache?

VIGDIS.

I'm sorry, Thord.

THORD.

If you knew how much it aggravated. But there. You only do it to drive me mad.

VIGDIS.

I don't, Thord.

THORD.

Contradict me. Do. That's right. Contradict me. I suppose you'll say next——
But there, it's always the way.

VIGDIS.

Thord!

THORD.

Now, why wasn't supper ready the moment I came in?

VIGDIS.

You said you'd be home late, Thord, and that supper wasn't to be till half-past seven.

THORD.

You might have known the fair would be a bad one.

VIGDIS.

Was the fair a bad one?

THORD.

O, use your sense. Use your sense, woman.

VIGDIS.

But I do, Thord.

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THORD.

Would I be here at this time if the fair had been a good one? You know perfectly well I shouldn't.

VIGDIS.

I'm so sorry, Thord.

THORD.

[*Growling.*] Yes, so that you might have more money to spend on jewellery. [*He sits down.*] I'm tired.

VIGDIS.

Let me help you pull your boots off. [*She pulls a boot and drops it.*]

THORD.

O, for Heaven's sake.

Didn't I tell you I'd got a headache? But there. No, I'll take off the other myself. I'm tired to death.

VIGDIS.

Let me give you a nip of brandy.

THORD.

Brandy? With a headache? You know

brandy nearly kills me. Now do for Heaven's sake leave me alone.

VIGDIS.

You're tired, Thord. You're tired. Lie down on the chest, and rest till supper. You're tired to death.

THORD.

I wouldn't be tired if I wasn't driven half mad by your tongue. A plague take all wives and all fairs. . |

VIGDIS.

Tell me about the fair, Thord, if you're not too tired.

THORD.

I've already told you about the fair.

VIGDIS.

Were there many people?

THORD.

Enough to fill a graveyard. I'd be glad to have the burying of some of them.

VIGDIS.

What's the news?

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THORD.

News? What d'ye want with news?

VIGDIS.

But I like to hear what's going on. What were they talking of?

THORD.

What were who talking of?

VIGDIS.

The people at the fair.

THORD.

None of their business. That's what they were talking of. They were talking of a murder.

VIGDIS.

A murder!

THORD.

[*Shouting.*] A murder. Can't you pay attention when I'm talking to you. I said a murder. Why don't you listen?

VIGDIS.

Who has been murdered?

Mount St. Charles College
LIBRARY

Helena, - Montana.

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THORD.

I didn't say anyone had been murdered.

VIGDIS.

But you said——

THORD.

But I said nothing of the sort. There was a fight down on the beach and a man was killed.

VIGDIS.

What man?

THORD.

That big swaggering fellow Hall.

VIGDIS.

Hall? Brother of Ingiald?

THORD.

Yes. Brother of Ingiald. A lout he was, too.

VIGDIS.

Who killed him?

THORD.

Does it matter to you who killed him?

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VIGDIS.

No. Only I would like to know.

THORD.

You're always wanting to know. You want to know too much. What was Hall to you?

VIGDIS.

Nothing. My cousin was his partner. That's all I know about him. And they used to quarrel all day, as though they were man and wife.

THORD.

I suppose that's meant for me. Well, I don't know who killed him. But I know this.

VIGDIS.

What?

THORD.

I pity the man who did it.

VIGDIS.

Why?

THORD.

Have you any sense at all, woman?

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VIGDIS.

I don't see why he should be pitied.

THORD.

Well, I do. D'you suppose a great man like Ingiald will let his brother's murderer escape?

VIGDIS.

But you said it was a fight on the beach.

THORD.

I said. I said. I said. Nag. Nag. Nag. Even if it were, d'you suppose a man like Ingiald would let the man escape? Ingiald'll hunt him down. That murderer's a doomed man.

VIGDIS.

Poor fellow, I say.

THORD.

Serve him right, I say. Serve him right.

VIGDIS.

I wonder who it was.

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THORD.

It isn't known who it was. Two or three are suspected.

VIGDIS.

I hope it wasn't cousin Thorolf.

THORD.

Well, if it was he must take the consequences.

VIGDIS.

That man Hall was a sad man to work with. I hate to speak ill of a dead man; but he had a bad name.

THORD.

He was a drunken boor.

VIGDIS.

He went for Thorolf with an axe once.

THORD.

Well, I pity the man who went for *him* with an axe. Is supper ever going to come at all? Or am I to stay talking here all night.

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VIGDIS.

Won't you go in and lie down, Thord?
Supper will be ready in a moment.

THORD.

How can I go in and lie down? You know perfectly well I've got to see to the chores. I can't trust the hired men.

VIGDIS.

I'll run out and see to the chores, Thord.

THORD.

You? I can't trust you to get supper, let alone do the chores. No. I must sacrifice myself. I've got a headache and I'm half dead. But there, it's always the way. I must do a thing myself if I want it done. Give me my boots.

VIGDIS.

Let me go, Thord. I'll see the cows driven in and milked.

THORD.

Give—me—my—boots. Don't I tell you. Don't tell me what you'll do and what you'll

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not do. There [*puts on boots*] I thought when I came in I'd have time to rest myself. But there. It's always the way. [*Turns to go out.*] What are you glowering there for? Go—and—get—the supper ready. When you've worn me to my grave I suppose you'll be glad. You do make me so mad.

VIGDIS.

I'll have supper directly, Thord.

THORD.

You do make me so mad. But there. It's always the way. [*He goes out.*]

VIGDIS.

It's a pity we've no child, Thord and I. They say a child is a great sweetener in a house. If we'd a child, perhaps he wouldn't take on so. Ah well. It wasn't like this when we were courting. I must get this table clear. If I'd had a child now, he'd have been different. That's what a wife must expect. Nothing but "O my headache," and "O if I'm not tired." I only wanted to hear about the murder. It's not

so often we get a murder to talk about. The way he talks you'd think we had one every day. So Hall is murdered. I never liked that man. I wonder who killed him. Well. There's one comfort. My cousin Thorolf wouldn't go for to kill a man. Not even Hall, he wouldn't. He wouldn't kill a fly, my cousin Thorolf wouldn't. He's like a blessed babe. [*The door at the back is knocked violently.*] Bless us and save us.

VOICE.

Let me in. Let me in. Vigdis. Thord.

VIGDIS.

Who's there?

VOICE.

Open. Open. For God's sake let me in.

VIGDIS.

Enter. If you be of God.

VOICE.

Open.

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VIGDIS.

[*Running to door.*] Come in. Who's there?

[*Enter THOROLF.*]

Thorolf. Cousin Thorolf. How are you,

THOROLF.

Stand back. Don't kiss me.

VIGDIS.

What's the matter, Thorolf?

THOROLF.

Stand back. You keep your hands off.

VIGDIS.

But I'm your cousin, Thorolf.

THOROLF.

Yes. But perhaps you won't be quite so glad to be my cousin when you hear the news.

VIGDIS.

What news, Thorolf?

THOROLF.

About Hall.

VIGDIS.

He's dead. What d'ye mean, Thorolf?

THOROLF.

I killed him, Vigdis.

VIGDIS.

You, Thorolf?

THOROLF.

He cheated me. O, but I can't go into that. So we fought, and I killed him. It was a fair fight. I didn't want to kill him, God knows.

VIGDIS.

Men have no sense when they have swords in their hands.

THOROLF.

It was a fair fight.

VIGDIS.

I'm not blaming you, Thorolf. It seems men must kill each other from time to time. But what are you going to do now?

THOROLF.

What indeed.

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VIGDIS.

You know what it means. You must know what it means. Do they know you did it?

THOROLF.

Ingiald will know by this.

VIGDIS.

But you know what Ingiald is. He'll be after you to-night, now. Now. What will you do? What you will do, Thorolf?

THOROLF.

You're my cousin, Vigdis?

VIGDIS.

Of course I'm your cousin.

THOROLF.

You wouldn't cast me off. You don't think worse of me. I mean, it was a fair fight. It was fair and square.

VIGDIS.

Of course I won't cast you off. You're my cousin. Men have no sense at any time.

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But when they have swords in their hands—
it might happen to anyone.

THOROLF.

Vigdis. Will you stand by me?

VIGDIS.

You're my cousin, Thorolf. There's my hand. But don't waste time like this. Where will you hide? Who can shelter you against Ingiald? The King himself could hardly do it. It's death to shelter you. Where will you go? Think. Think. Where will you go?

THOROLF.

I was thinking perhaps you would shelter me.

VIGDIS.

I, Thorolf?

THOROLF.

You and Thord.

VIGDIS.

And Thord?

THOROLF.

I was thinking perhaps you would.

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VIGDIS.

Against Ingiald?

THOROLF.

Until I could get a ship. Only till I could get a ship.

VIGDIS.

Against a man like Ingiald?

THOROLF.

I know it's a risk, dear. I know it's a risk.

VIGDIS.

You know, Thorolf, my man Thord isn't much of a warrior.

THOROLF.

It wouldn't be for long, dear. If I could lie low a night or two——

VIGDIS.

What should we be, against Ingiald?

THOROLF.

If we could just put him off the track, dear, then I could slip down to Broadfirth

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and get a ship. It would only be a night or two.

VIGDIS.

Thord is Thord. And I'm only a woman, and women aren't much good in a case of this sort.

THOROLF.

Let me stay, Vigdis. Will you?

VIGDIS.

I wish I could think of a plan.

THOROLF.

Where else can I go?

VIGDIS.

Go? You won't go anywhere. You'll just stay here, where you are. Don't worry yourself about that. It's Ingiald and Thord I'm thinking of.

THOROLF.

My God, Vigdis, you're good. I'll kiss you for that.

VIGDIS.

Oh, none of your nonsense, now. This

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is no kissing matter. No, you can't stay in here. Let go my hand, or I'll box your ears. Come this way, now. I'll shut you up in the sheep-fold. Quickly, now, before my husband comes. [*Goes out at side door.*]

THOROLF.

I've only got to put Ingiald off the track, dear. Old Hrut will get me a ship.

VIGDIS.

Put Ingiald off the track first, my friend. We'll think of the ship later. Come along. [*Exeunt.*]

[*The other side door opens, and re-enter*

THORD.]

THORD.

Vigdis. Vigdis. Is supper ready yet? Now if that isn't too bad. What's the woman thinking of? Vigdis, I say. It's not enough that I have a headache, and get fairly fratted to death, but I'm to be kept waiting for my supper. Vigdis. Vigdis, I say. [*Enter VIGDIS.*]

VIGDIS.

What is it, Thord?

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THORD.

What is it? Supper. Where's supper.
Why on earth isn't supper ready?

VIGDIS.

I've had a visitor, Thord. A guest.

THORD.

A guest, eh. Who invited him?

VIGDIS.

No one invited him. He's a sort of a relation of mine.

THORD.

So it is a he. How long am I to be tortured with him?

VIGDIS.

I'd like him to stay for some time. If you don't mind, Thord.

THORD.

You know I mind. You know as well as I do I can't abide strangers in the house. They make this house just like an inn. Except that they never pay for what they have. I will not put up with it. It's enough

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that I'm half mad with headache, but I must have a stranger in the house. But there. It's always the way. Who is this stranger? Is he respectable?

VIGDIS.

He's a sort of relation of mine. I told you just now.

THORD.

A relation. If it had been a stranger I wouldn't have minded; but to have a relation. And I shall have to be civil to him. Vigdis, I do think you might have had a little thought of me. But there. You think of no one but yourself. It's always the way with you women.

VIGDIS.

It won't be for long, Thord.

THORD.

I tell you what it is, Vigdis. If he's respectable he may stay the night and go on before breakfast. If he's one of these rowdy fellows, or if he's in trouble, I'll not have him near the place. I'll put the dogs on him myself.

VIGDIS.

You cannot, Thord. I've already taken him in. I can't go back on my word. I've promised him shelter now.

THORD.

Shelter?

VIGDIS.

You see he's in trouble.

THORD.

What trouble? Who is he, once for all?

VIGDIS.

Cousin Thorolf.

THORD.

Thorolf! What's he been doing? He's an idle blackguard, Thorolf.

VIGDIS.

He's not.

THORD.

He is, I say. Don't contradict. What's he been doing?

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VIGDIS.

There was . . . It was . . . It was a fair fight, Thord.

THORD.

A—fair—fight. You—don't—mean——

VIGDIS.

Down on the beach.

THORD.

Not . . . No . . . Not Hall?

VIGDIS.

Yes. He killed Hall.

THORD.

Ingiald's brother.

VIGDIS.

Ingiald's brother.

THORD.

And you've been such a fool as to take him in. To take in Hall's murderer. Ingiald's brother's murderer.

VIGDIS.

It was a fair fight, Thord.

THORD.

It—was—a—fair fight. A—fair—fight.
Ingiald's brother. A fair fight.

VIGDIS.

They fought with swords.

THORD.

In my house. Here. Ingiald's brother's murderer. And you've let him in. Where is he?

VIGDIS.

In the sheep-fold at the back of the house, for the present. That's a good place. They'd never look among the sheep.

THORD.

My head is like the seven mills of Mill-town. In my house. O, my head. O miserable man. It'll be my death. It's not enough that I must have a headache, and come home tired out, but I must have Ingiald down on me. He'll burn the house. He

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will. He will. I know Ingiald. He'll burn the house. He's sure to find out. And if he doesn't burn the house he'll put a blood-fine on me. He'll fine me a flock of sheep. It's not enough that I'm fratted to death and find no supper ready, but I must lose my cattle and be murdered in my bed. But there, it's always the way.

VIGDIS.

You'll be nothing of the sort. Have pity on poor Thorolf.

THORD.

Pity. Let poor Thorolf show a little pity on me. I'm a ruined man. Ingiald will drag me up and down by the hair. He'll hit me in the ribs with his great fists. He will. He will. I know Ingiald. And you go and take in a murderer. A murderer. If it had been a murderer of some common man I wouldn't have minded. But the murderer of Ingiald's brother.

VIGDIS.

I tell you it was not a murder. Thorolf's no murderer. He's like a woman in most

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things, Thorolf is. I tell you it was not a murder. It was a fair fight.

THORD.

So Ingiald'll say. Yes, he'll say. I'll take your sheep, he'll say. And them nice cows too, Thord, he'll say. It was a nice fair fight, he'll say, so now I'll burn you in your bed. I know Ingiald. Ahoo. Ahoo.

VIGDIS.

Well. I wouldn't be a cry baby. There's worse things than being burned in our beds. Come. Be a man, Thord. One would think you were afraid of dying.

THORD.

O hold your nagging tongue, for God's sake. Ahoo. Ahoo.

VIGDIS.

It will all come right, Thord. Look. I'll get you some nice supper.

THORD.

You'll drive me mad in another minute. Supper, Ingiald's knife'll be the only supper

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I shall have. Hold your nagging tongue, and let me die in peace.

VIGDIS.

It's very likely that we'll have Ingiald here before long. He's not a man to wait on the road. He comes like an eagle, Ingiald does.

THORD.

O what shall I do? What shall I do?

VIGDIS.

Do? Put a bold face on it. There's no danger where there's no fear. Look him in the face and tell him to walk out of here.

THORD.

He may be coming now. Look out at the door, Vigdis. Is he coming?

VIGDIS.

There's someone coming. It's a party of men. A dozen, quite.

THORD.

O, I'm not fit to die. I'm not.

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VIGDIS.

Be a man. They're coming quickly. They'll be here in a minute. Yes. It's Ingiald. There's his red cloak. He's walking ahead of the rest. Be a man now, Thord. It'll be all right.

THORD.

O! O!

VIGDIS.

Can you think of any better plan than the sheep-fold?

THORD.

O!

VIGDIS.

O, why didn't I marry a man? You don't think he'd look in the sheep-fold, with all the sheep in it? I'm sure he wouldn't.

THORD.

O, Thorolf's all right. It's myself I'm thinking of. It's myself. O!

VIGDIS.

I wonder you aren't ashamed.

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THORD.

I was getting on so well. I'd have been able to buy Rapp's field next year——

VIGDIS.

Think of poor Thorolf. Brace up, man. Ingiald'll suspect at once if he sees you like that. What's your life? What's my life? It's our guest's life that matters.

THORD.

An idle vagrant's life better than mine? If it had been the king, now.

VIGDIS.

Thord, brace yourself. Thorolf's safe in the sheep-fold. Ingiald can prove nothing. Your guest's life depends on the way you look. Don't flop there like a done-out old gather-up of a bachelor. Swell your chest out. Put a scowl on, like a Viking. That's better. Here they are.

[A knock at the door.]

THORD.

O, I'm a dead man.

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VIGDIS.

O, I could shake you. For Thorolf's sake,
perk yourself.

[*A knock.*]

Come in. Go and open the door, Thord.

THORD.

I can't. How can you ask me to open
the door?

[*A knock.*]

VIGDIS.

Go on, Thord. Go. Open, man.

THORD.

Vigdis. You don't mind. You open.
Your nerves aren't like mine.

VIGDIS.

Quick, Thord. It's for the host to open.

VOICES.

Open within there. Open in the name
of the law.

VIGDIS.

I must open, then. [*Goes to the door.*]
Come in, come in.

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[Enter INGIALD and MEN-AT-ARMS.]

INGIALD.

God save all here. Thank you, Vigdis.

VIGDIS.

My man's not quite himself, to-night,
Lord Ingiald.

INGIALD.

I'm sorry to hear that. What pin pricks
now, Thord?

THORD.

Ah. Oh.

INGIALD.

[*Looking keenly at both of them.*] I should
have thought life was pretty quiet up here.
No fighting. No gambling. No anxiety——

VIGDIS.

My man gets run down, Lord Ingiald.
It's going to these fairs that does it. I've
known him come home in a way of speaking,
and he'd be all cold, like a dead man. It's
the nerves and that on the brain. [*A pause.*]
What could I do for you, Lord Ingiald? Will
you not sit down? Is there anything you

would like to take? It's not often we see you up here. Why, I don't think I've seen you, not since last October twelve month.

INGIALD.

No. I daresay not. [*He goes over to THORD and bangs him on the shoulder.*]

THORD.

Ow. What is it, Ingiald? Don't.

INGIALD.

I want to have a talk with you, my friend.

THORD.

A—a talk. O yes. Yes, that. Yes. Very nice.

INGIALD.

[*To his men.*] Go out and stand by the door. Don't budge till I tell you.

MEN.

Ay, ay, sir.

[*Exeunt.*]

VIGDIS.

Wouldn't your men be pleased to take a

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drop of something? You've surely not come all the way from Sheep Isles. What is it we could do for you, Lord Ingiald? Perhaps you would let me hear it. My man's not himself to-night. Were you wanting any hands to help get your harvest in? Tell me what it is.

INGIALD.

Thank you, Vigdis. I want to have a talk with Thord, here.

THORD.

I—I'm so ill, Ingiald. It's the weather. Vigdis will do any business. My head. My head is bad. I'm a martyr to my head in wet weather.

INGIALD.

I know what it is. My own head gives me tortures. But I must have a talk with you. Perhaps you would ask your wife to mull me a little ale?

VIGDIS.

You must let me mull it in here, then. The kitchen fire's out.

INGIALD.

I should be delighted; but my nerves can't bear the smell of ale being mulled. It always upsets me. [*To THORD.*] Perhaps you would ask your wife to—to look at the sunset. Most beautiful sunset, outside.

VIGDIS.

Yes, we were looking at it this last half hour.

INGIALD.

I see. Well. Vigdis. I must talk to Thord here privately. Will you go into the next room? I won't keep you long.

VIGDIS.

Certainly, Lord Ingiald. Now, I won't have you telling my man about any of those naughty baggages at Reykjavik. He knows quite enough, already.

INGIALD.

I won't mention a single baggage. [*He calls to a SOLDIER.*] Erik, just attend the lady for a moment. [*Aside to SOLDIER.*] See she doesn't leave the room.

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VIGDIS.

I know you men. [*She tries to catch THORD's eye.*] Ill make him repeat every word you say. [*She goes out unconcernedly.*]

INGIALD.

[*Aside.*] Well. If you're not a wonder. [*Sharply.*] Now Thord, my friend, I've got only one thing to say to you. Where's Thorolf?

THORD.

Thorolf.

INGIALD.

Well?

THORD.

Which Thorolf would that be?

INGIALD.

You know quite well which Thorolf.

THORD.

O, you mean old Thorolf of the Ridge?
Ah yes. A fat man. He——

INGIALD.

Now, Thord. [*Glares at him.*]

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THORD.

O, young Thorolf. Koll o'Dales' lad.
He goes to school, now.

INGIALD.

[*Rapping the table.*] Thord.

THORD.

Don't, Ingiald. You put a fellow out so.

INGIALD.

Where's Thorolf. Vigdis's cousin. Your
cousin, Thorolf.

THORD.

Ha, ha, ha! *That* Thorolf. Yes. An idle
blackguard. Yes.

INGIALD.

Yes. That Thorolf. Where is he?

THORD.

I've not seen him, Ingiald.

INGIALD.

I suppose you've not heard about him,
either?

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THORD.

No.

INGIALD.

Not? Sure?

THORD.

No. I mean yes. Of course I've heard about him.

INGIALD.

About what he has done to-day?

THORD.

I didn't know he did anything to-day.

INGIALD.

You heard about my brother?

THORD.

Your poor brother, Hall? Yes, I was truly grieved. I was quite upset.

INGIALD.

That's what Thorolf did.

THORD.

Thorolf?

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INGIALD.

Now where is he?

THORD.

Your brother?

INGIALD.

I see. You won't answer.

THORD.

Now don't be hasty, Ingiald. You're so hasty. You don't give me a chance. What is it you want to know?

INGIALD.

Where is Thorolf?

THORD.

I've not seen him, Ingiald. How should I know where Thorolf is?

INGIALD.

He was seen coming towards this house.

THORD.

Towards this house?

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INGIALD.

Only an hour ago.

THORD.

Thorolf?

INGIALD.

No more talk, my friend. Where is he?

THORD.

I don't know, Ingiald. I don't know.

INGIALD.

You lying knave. You creeping worm. You dog of——. I'll ram this scabbard down your throat. You say you don't know. Where is he? Any more of your lies and I'll squeeze your lying tongue off.

THORD.

Don't, Ingiald. Don't. You're hurting. Don't, man.

INGIALD.

Well. No more of your lies, then.

THORD.

Now you've hurt me. I shall have a sore throat for a week.

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INGIALD.

Do you good. [*A pause.*] Now then, Thorolf's here. Isn't he. Hey?

THORD.

Yes, Ingiald.

INGIALD.

I thought we should come to it sooner or later. See what comes of being patient. So he's here. Hidden somewhere?

THORD.

Yes, Ingiald.

INGIALD.

Where is he hidden?

THORD.

O, but I couldn't tell you that. If I told you that I'd have to leave the country. No one would speak to me, if I told you that.

INGIALD.

That's nothing to do with me. Now then. Where is he?

THORD.

O, I couldn't.

INGIALD.

Hey?

THORD.

I'd have to leave this farm. Have mercy,
Ingiald.

INGIALD.

Mercy, eh?

THORD.

I couldn't bear it. I'm not strong, Ingiald.
My head.

INGIALD.

D'ye see this little knife of mine?

THORD.

O, don't, Ingiald. Ingiald, you don't
mean. Ingiald, I'd have to leave the country
if I told you.

INGIALD.

Look here, Thord. I'm going to get Thorolf
before I go. Let's understand each other.

THORD.

O, yes, Ingiald. I'll do anything. I'll

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say anything. But I can't tell you where he is. I can't. I'd have to leave the country.

INGIALD.

Well. You needn't tell me where he is. Not in so many words. D'ye understand?

THORD.

O, Ingiald.

INGIALD.

Let's come to some arrangement. You don't want your neighbours to call you a traitor. I understand that. You don't want me to burn your house down, or to stick this knife into you. I understand that, too. Well. You give up Thorolf to me quietly.

THORD.

I can't, Ingiald. They'd know. They'd know. Vigdis would tell them.

INGIALD.

I don't say "betray him," you silly gowk.

THORD.

But what then, Ingiald?

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INGIALD.

Give me some hint where he is, so that I can find him. I'll pretend to search the house, and light on him, as it were, by chance. Come now.

THORD.

But——

INGIALD.

Come now. D'ye see this bag? [*Produces a purse.*]

THORD.

Yes.

INGIALD.

D'ye hear it? Eh? Chink. Eh? Chink? Where is he?

THORD.

I couldn't.

INGIALD.

Come now. Hark? Three silver marks. Eh? Just whisper. Where? Come now.

THORD.

Three silver marks.

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INGIALD.

Three silver marks. You needn't say it right out. Hear it jingle.

THORD.

It's a lot of money.

INGIALD.

You could do with it, eh? Come now, old man, where is he?

THORD.

Let me weigh it in my hand.

INGIALD.

Certainly. Here you are. Now then. Whisper here. Where is he? Tell me where he is. Where is he? Is he in the chest here?

THORD.

No, not in the chest.

INGIALD.

No? What is in the chest?

THORD.

Things of Vigdis's.

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INGIALD.

Is he upstairs, then? Eh? Upstairs?

THORD.

No. He's not upstairs.

INGIALD.

Outside? Eh?

THORD.

[*Putting the bag on the table.*] Ingiald.

INGIALD.

Yes. Well. What is it?

THORD.

You won't take it to heart my hiding him?

INGIALD.

No. No. Of course I won't.

THORD.

Swear you won't. You won't fine me?
Nor take my cattle?

INGIALD.

Not if you tell me where he is.

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THORD.

You'll search the house first, Ingiald. In pretence?

INGIALD.

Yes. I'll pretend to search the house. And then?

THORD.

You see that door there?

INGIALD.

Yes. Yes. What then?

THORD.

You must go through that door. No. No. Go through *this* door, and then round the house.

INGIALD.

Yes? Where to? Among the ricks?

THORD.

No. Not among the ricks.

INGIALD.

In the dairy?

THORD.

You might look in the dairy.

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INGIALD.

Where else, eh?

THORD.

Just to the left of the dairy.

INGIALD.

The cowbyre, eh?

THORD.

No. No. You might look in the cowbyre, though.

INGIALD.

Where else?

THORD.

Ingiald.

INGIALD.

Yes.

THORD.

Swear you won't tell any one. Swear you won't say I told you.

INGIALD.

Of course I won't tell anyone.

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THORD.

You might count the sheep. You understand?

INGIALD.

To the left of the dairy, eh?

THORD.

To the left of the dairy.

INGIALD.

I'll see them counted. Thank'ee, Thord.

THORD.

Now, you'll pretend to look upstairs?

INGIALD.

Yes. We'll let in Vigdis, now.

THORD.

No, not Vigdis, no.

INGIALD.

Yes, man. Hey there. Erik!

ERIK.

Sir.

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INGIALD.

Tell the lady to come in.

ERIK.

Tell the lady to come in, sir. You may go in now, mum.

[*Enter* VIGDIS.]

VIGDIS.

Well. Have you had a nice talk?

INGIALD.

No. Not so nice as I could have wished, perhaps. Your husband's very low to-night. Excuse me a moment. Hi there. Hrapp, Hoskuld.

SOLDIERS.

[*Entering.*] Sir. Sir.

INGIALD.

I'm sorry, Vigdis. But I must search the house. Your husband has given me permission. I must look through all the rooms.

VIGDIS.

Search my house, indeed.

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INGIALD.

I won't disarrange it more than can be helped.

VIGDIS.

Search my house, indeed. For what will you search my house?

INGIALD.

For your cousin, Thorolf.

VIGDIS.

My—cousin—Thorolf. And why should you want my cousin Thorolf, I should like to know?

INGIALD.

Come, Vigdis, I'm sorry. Now don't let's have a scene.

VIGDIS.

A scene, indeed. And why should you have a scene? I'm not going to have my house pulled to pieces.

INGIALD.

They won't do any harm, Vigdis.

VIGDIS.

Harm or no harm, I won't have anyone

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spying around in my house. I never heard of such impudence. This is *my* house. It isn't Thorolf's house. What d'ye want Thorolf for?

INGIALD.

You know perfectly well, Vigdis, what I want Thorolf for.

VIGDIS.

[*To THORD.*] And I'm to be insulted in my own house! I wonder you sit there and let your wife be insulted. As for you, Ingiald, for all your lordship, you never had more manners than one brought up in a pig-stye. It is what I might expect from you. But as for you, Thord, I'm ashamed of you. Defend your wife, man. Don't let these louts throw the whole house overboard.

INGIALD.

[*To his men.*] Upstairs with you. Search every room in the house.

VIGDIS.

How dare you insult a woman so. You great captains want humbling. If I were a man now, you wouldn't dare.

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ERIK.

[*To INGIALD.*] Beg pardon, captain.

INGIALD.

What is it?

ERIK.

That box, captain. [*Points to chest.*]

INGIALD.

Well. What about it?

ERIK.

I was thinking he might be in that box.

INGIALD.

O, nonsense. Upstairs with you.

[*They all run upstairs.*]

[*To THORD.*] You come, too, Thord. If anything's missing you'll blame my men.

THORD.

[*Aside.*] Let Vigdis go, Ingiald. Take Vigdis.

INGIALD.

[*Glancing at her.*] No. She suspects nothing. You come.

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THORD.

No. I don't think she suspects. No, she suspects nothing.

VIGDIS.

Where are you going, Thord?

THORD.

Upstairs with Ingiald.

VIGDIS.

Am I married to a man or to a bleating old sheep with the staggers. Do you call yourself a human being, Thord? [*Aside.*] What's Ingiald going to do?

INGIALD.

Come, Thord. Come on, now.

THORD.

[*To VIGDIS.*] Get supper ready. Don't stand there.

[*Exit with INGIALD.*]

VIGDIS.

Get supper ready. Get supper ready. What's he going to do? Why didn't Thord

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give me a hint? He'll search the sheep-fold. Of course he'll search the sheep-fold. He'll be going to the fold in another minute. Why did I leave him in the sheep-fold? Why did I let him stay at all? What can I do? What can I do? He'll be down in a minute. What's this bag of money? What's this bag of money? Thord's sold him. It's blood money, I know it. What can I do? O, God. What can I do?

THORD.

[*Above.*] VIGDIS.

VIGDIS.

Yes, Thord.

THORD.

All right. Nothing. I only wanted to know if you were there.

VIGDIS.

What can I do? I know. I know. It's a bare chance. It's a bare chance.

[*She runs softly and swiftly from the room.*]

[*In two seconds she returns with THOROLF.*]

[*Noise above, and shouts.*]

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VIGDIS.

Quiet. Quiet. Not a whisper.

THOROLF.

What shall I do?

VIGDIS.

Not a whisper.

THORD.

[*Above.*] Vigdis. Are you there still?

VIGDIS.

I'm still here, Thord. What's the matter with you? Into the chest, Thorolf. Get into the chest. [*She opens chest.*]

THOROLF.

[*Kissing her.*] Good-bye, in case, Vigdis.

VIGDIS.

O, you silly boy. Get in. I must lock you in. Don't sneeze, for God's sake. Press your upper lip if you want to sneeze. It's a bare chance, Thorolf. [*She locks the chest on him and takes key. Then she hurriedly*

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*and softly puts bread and beer upon the table
as for supper.]*

[*Re-enter* INGIALD, THORD, and SOLDIERS.]

VIGDIS.

Well, my lord. Did you find my cousin
Thorolf by any chance?

INGIALD.

I've not finished looking yet.

VIGDIS.

Haven't you? You might look on the
dresser there. I would if I were you. Or
in the oven. Yes, look in the oven, Ingiald.
Show him the oven, Thord.

INGIALD.

[*To some of his men.*] Step into the kitchen,
and look in the oven. You. Come with
me the rest of you. We must look through
the farmyard.

VIGDIS.

Don't disturb your elder brother, Ingiald.

INGIALD.

What elder brother?

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VIGDIS.

The donkey.

INGIALD.

Ah, you're funny, Vigdis. Well, he laughs best who laughs last, *I* say.

[*Exit with MEN.*]

VIGDIS.

Thord. Thord Goddi.

THORD.

Yes, Vigdis.

VIGDIS.

What's this bag of money, here?

THORD.

Bag of money?

VIGDIS.

This bag of money here. What is it?

THORD.

It's what I brought from market.

VIGDIS.

It's nothing of the sort.

Helena, - Montana,

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THORD.

Oh no. Nor it is.

VIGDIS.

Well?

THORD.

Well? I suppose Ingiald left it there when he came in.

VIGDIS.

Did you see Ingiald leave it there? O, what am I thinking of? [*Aside.*]

THORD.

Now for Heaven's sake stop nagging. Hark!

VIGDIS.

What is it?

THORD.

I thought I heard a noise in the yard. A cry.

VIGDIS.

My God. A cry. [*They go to the door.*]

THORD.

I hope they won't find him.

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VIGDIS.

Thank God I did what I could for him.
O, may Heaven blind them.

THORD.

I'm afraid they're sure to find him. What
was that?

VIGDIS.

My God. They're brave, aren't they,
thirteen to one?

THORD.

Didn't you hear a sort of groan then?

VIGDIS.

Poor Thorolf. Poor Thorolf.

THORD.

We did our best, Vigdis.

VIGDIS.

Yes. May God always help you, Thord,
as well as you helped Thorolf!

THORD.

Yes, I shall always be glad I did my best
for him.

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VIGDIS.

Yes, Thord. I suppose you will be. I hope you will be.

THORD.

Poor fellow.

VIGDIS.

Poor Thorolf.

THORD.

Don't take on, Vigdis. We must all die. Ah. Ah. Come away from the door. Come. [*Cries without.*]

VIGDIS.

[*Covering her eyes.*] O, my dear, my dear. O Thorolf, little brown-haired Thorolf.

THORD.

There. There. It's all over now.

VIGDIS.

O, my Thorolf, my cousin Thorolf.

THORD.

There. There. Now don't take on. Don't take on; you get on my nerves when you cry like that.

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VIGDIS.

O, you had brown hair, Thorolf. Bonny hair you had. O, my boy, my poor cousin.
[*Cries without.*]

THORD.

[*Aside.*] They've got him. They've got him. [*He rubs his hands.*] We all owe Heaven a death. Poor Thorolf. Poor fellow. And him so young.

VIGDIS.

It was a sight for sore eyes on a sunny morning to see him going over the hills. O, Thorolf, you were the joy of a woman's eyes. You were as stately as a stag. You were as comely as a king's darling. O, my boy, my poor cousin, my own dear, my heart's darling, Thorolf!

THORD.

And him so young. And such a promising young fellow. To be cut short. Life is but a span. And him so young. Idle, vicious, drunken blackguard, it's a good job you are cut short. [*More noise without.*]

VIGDIS.

He had soft brown hair with threads of gold in it like the bright bird's feathers. Now it's dabbled with blood, dabbled with blood, dabbled with blood.

THORD.

Dabbled with blood. O! O me!

VIGDIS.

O young man, O treasure of the west, O white, comely, handsome Thorolf! Yours will be a cold bride bed under the winter grass.

THORD.

O do for Heaven's sake be quiet.

VIGDIS.

A cold bed, a lonely bed, a white bed.

THORD.

You'll waste none of our sheets, laying of him out. Let me tell you that.

VIGDIS.

Three white lonely candles in a draught,

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three flames guttering, but you will lie still beneath them, Thorolf.

THORD.

Vigdis. Do you want to drive me mad? Have done now.

VIGDIS.

O bonny Thorolf. Swimming and rowing and going among young men you were like a king. None could sail a boat like you. No queen ever loosed her hair about a lovelier lover than you. You were courteous, you were kind, you had strength and beauty, you were brave; now you will lie in the ground, and the sheep will crop the grass there.

THORD.

Here. Vigdis. A little of that goes a long way. Thorolf's dead. Here's Ingiald coming back. Hold your noise now, for Heaven's sake.

[*Re-enter INGIALD with MEN.*]

INGIALD.

I've a bone to pick with you, Thord.

VIGDIS.

Bring me my dead. Give me my dead, you butchers, you bloody men.

INGIALD.

D'ye hear?

VIGDIS.

Thirteen to one. Thirteen to one. You butchers. You bloody men. Bring me my dead. Bring me my dead darling. You cowards. You cowards.

INGIALD.

What's wrong with *you*, Vigdis?

VIGDIS.

Let me look upon the boy's dead face. You butchers. O fair, white face. O white face with the red blood upon it. O my boy, my dear boy, Thorolf.

INGIALD.

He'll be a white face when I get him and that's a fact, Vigdis. I'll promise you that much. Thord, I'll wring your ears off.

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VIGDIS.

Where is my dead lad? You dogs. You butchers. Take me to his corpse.

INGIALD.

Your dead lad? There's no dead lad.

VIGDIS.

Not dead. O, Heaven! [*Pretends to swoon.*]

THORD.

What?

INGIALD.

I'll tell you what, you creeping rot. You cur. You Judas. What have you done with him?

THORD.

Done with him?

INGIALD.

With Thorolf. Eh. Where is he? Eh? What have you done with him?

THORD.

I've done nothing, Ingiald. Nothing.

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INGIALD.

Don't tell me you've done nothing.

THORD.

I didn't do anything with him.

INGIALD.

You lying knave. D'ye dare to sit there
and say you haven't got him off?

THORD.

I haven't got him off.

INGIALD.

You lie.

THORD.

How could I have got him off?

INGIALD.

How? How do I know how? But I'll
know how. I'll flay you alive. I'll skin
you and salt you. I'll—I'll—I'll——

THORD.

O don't. Ingiald, I swear—I swear I
thought you'd get him.

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INGIALD.

I tell you, you've got him off.

THORD.

I haven't, Ingiald.

INGIALD.

[*To his men.*] Look at him. Look at this liar, here. I come here to this liar and tell him I want Thorolf. And he cringes and whines and licks my boots. So I just speak to him kindly, like a father. I'm always kindly and like a father. I'm too kind. And he cringes and whines, and begs me not to hit him. Only spare my precious hide, he says, and I'll tell you where Thorolf is.

THE MEN.

Hear that now. He betrayed him, etc.

Then he wants a little money, for saying where Thorolf is. The money on the table there. Three marks of silver, no less. He'd sell his own mother for a little money. Wouldn't you, eh?

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THORD.

I wouldn't.

INGIALD.

You would, you know it. Three marks of silver you begged. And then you told me to look in the sheep-fold.

THE MEN.

Treacherous swine. His own cousin. His own cousin.

INGIALD.

And then he sneaks his man off while we're rummaging in the wrong place. And now he expects me to be out three marks of silver.

THE MEN.

Tie him to the bull's tail, master; and let's hunt him.

INGIALD.

So you'd sell your cousin, would you, and then try to go back on your bargain? [*Going to him.*] Where have you taken Thorolf to? Eh?

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THORD.

He was in the sheep-fold where I told you, Ingiald. He was. Indeed he was.

INGIALD.

O. Was he? And where is he now? Gone to Olaf's, I suppose.

THORD.

He may have gone to Olaf's.

THE MEN.

Olaf's is a likely place. We'd better go on there at once.

INGIALD.

Lord help you, Thord, if we don't get him. Understand? I mean it. Come on there.

A MAN.

You never looked in that chest yet, captain.

INGIALD.

O yes, that chest. [*He tries lid.*] Where's the key, Thord?

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THORD.

Ask Vigdis.

INGIALD.

Where's the key of this chest, Vigdis?

VIGDIS.

Key of the chest, indeed. Who are you to ask for my keys? I'm not going to have you spying in my chests. You and your gang have done harm enough here. You'll get no key. Let that be enough.

INGIALD. |

Come now. The key.

VIGDIS.

I tell you, you shall not have the key.

THE MEN.

Break it open, captain.

A MAN.

O let the chest alone. Thorolf'll be safe at Olaf's if we don't hurry.

INGIALD.

Give me the key.

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THORD.

Give up the key at once.

VIGDIS.

I tell you, you shall not have the key.
You've thrown the house overboard as it is.
Get out now. Go.

INGIALD.

Give me that key at once, Vigdis.

VIGDIS.

[*Flinging key on floor.*] Take it then, and
bad luck go with it. Here it is. Now open.

INGIALD.

[*Giving it back.*] Thank you. That's all
I wanted. Now, Thord. Give back that
bag of money.

THORD.

O, Ingiald, you gave it to me.

INGIALD.

Now you will give it back.

THORD.

O, Ingiald.

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VIGDIS.

Give it, Thord. Give it, you Judas, you. D'ye think I'll have blood money in the house. Give it up at once.

[The Men go out and linger at the door.]

INGIALD.

Come on now.

VIGDIS.

[Taking money bag.] I've only one thing to say to you, Ingiald. I say, take your money and get out of my house, now. *[She makes him back to the door.]* Take your dirty blood money. *[She smites him over the face with the money bag and drives him out. She watches them go.]* Go on to Olaf's with you, and try some other Judas. That's all I've to say to you, my lord. *[She turns and unlocks chest. Then, instead of opening, she turns to look at Thord. Thord goes to door and looks out, comes back and sits on chest. Vigdis backs away from him.]*

THORD.

Well. They've gone. *[A pause.]* They've

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gone. [*No answer.*] Can't you answer when I speak to you?

VIGDIS.

Yes. I can answer. Listen to me, Thord Goddi. You and I will part from now. You took money to betray Thorolf, your guest and my cousin. I always knew you for a mean man. Now I know you are base, and a dastard, and a dog. God forgive me, I once loved you. Pah. I let you kiss me. I held you in my arms. There. There. There. Take it. [*She flings her wedding ring at him.*] Now we'll part, my sir. I thank God I never bore you a child.

THORD.

[*Laughing nervously.*] I've got a headache. I can't—Ow—[*The chest lid rises. Thord leaps from it. Thorolf appears.*] Thorolf!

THOROLF.

Thorolf!

THORD.

Thorolf, I didn't mean—I swear I didn't.

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I didn't mean. It was only a joke. I'll explain.

THOROLF.

Thord. Pah. You're not worth it.

THORD.

O Thorolf. You shall have—I'll give you my money. All of it——

THOROLF.

Pah. Vigdis, my dear, where are they?

VIGDIS.

They've gone, Thorolf. We can slip away to Broadfirth now. It's quite safe. Come. Come. We'll go together, my friend. [*They turn to go.*]

THORD.

I'll change my religion.

CURTAIN.

Written in 1906.

THE SWEEPS OF NINETY-EIGHT

THE SWEEPS OF NINETY-EIGHT

SCENE: *An inn at Dunleary. A parlour.*

TIGER ROCHE, *an old, well-preserved man, with his left arm in a sling.*

ROCHE.

I have been in seven lost causes. This is the seventh; and it comes to an end like the others. There were good fellows with me. They poured out their lives like water. Good fellows they were. They are all gone now. Shears, and all of them. My God! but they were brave. And to think of those swine at the Castle ruling men like they were! [*He rings the bell.*]

[*Enter HOSTESS.*]

Well, what did the ship-captain say?

HOSTESS.

There'll be a boat below the door here in half an hour from now.

ROCHE.

And he'll engage to land me in France?

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HOSTESS.

In France itself.

ROCHE.

You said half an hour?

HOSTESS.

Yes, sir.

ROCHE.

So I've half an hour more in Ireland.
Half an hour more in Ireland, and then—

Adieu for ever more,

My love,

Adieu for ever more.

Well, there's no sense in sorrow; I may as
well have some wine.

HOSTESS.

What wine would you like, sir? Claret?
Burgundy?

ROCHE.

Have you any Miss Taylor?

HOSTESS.

Why, sir, that's a common drink. Only
sailors drink Miss Taylor.

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ROCHE.

I drank a cup of Miss Taylor the day I landed at Killala. I would drink it again to the memory of the friends who pledged me in it. [*Soliloquizing.*] It ought not to have failed. But the honest purpose does fail, for it is fighting the knavery of the world. It's a harsh alternative, to fail or be British. Fail, aye, and I'm proud to fail.

Better be trampled out by asses' hooves
Than be the thing the asses' mind approves.

[HOSTESS *goes out and returns with bottle and glass.*]

HOSTESS.

Here it is, sir.

ROCHE.

I thank you.

[HOSTESS *goes out.*]

[*Pouring out a glass of wine and holding it up.*]

I drink to you, my comrades. You fought a good fight, my comrades. You were spent

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like water. Your names shall be written in fire.

[*Re-enter* HOSTESS.]

HOSTESS.

There's some gentlemen coming, sir. Perhaps you'd like to step aside, sir. The cellar's dark, and there's a good place in the hen-house.

ROCHE.

I'll stay where I am, thank you.

HOSTESS.

It may be dangerous for you to stay, sir. One of them's that Major Sirr.

ROCHE.

I shall be glad to meet him.

HOSTESS.

[*Looking out.*] It may be very dangerous, sir. One of them's that Major Sandys.

ROCHE.

O! Who's the third?

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HOSTESS.

Sir, would you not be advised, since it might be your death? He's the drunken fat man who flogged poor Mr. Wright. I must go out, sir.

[*Exit.*]

ROCHE.

Old Fitzpatrick! I shall have pleasant company for my last half-hour in Ireland.
[*He sits down.*]

[*Enter MAJOR SIRR, MAJOR SANDYS, and THOMAS JUDKIN FITZPATRICK, J. P.*]

FITZ.

And so, sir, when he said that, sir, there was no use bothering a jury.

SIRR.

Aha. Very good, very good. You are a wag, sir.

FITZ.

Yes, sir, the rebellious dog.

SAND.

All the same, the rebellion's not stamped

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out. I shall be glad when that new regiment comes in.

SIRR.

What new regiment?

SAND.

O, a Kentish regiment. Fencibles and that. They'll be marching through here, by the way. Before we go, I expect.

SIRR.

Well, the more the merrier. But all the same, I think we've scotched the rebellion. Let's sit down and be merry.

SAND.

All the same, I'm glad the new regiment's coming. And I'm glad it'll pass this tavern. We are in the enemy's country, so far from Dublin.

SIRR.

Come, let's be merry. Mr. Fitzpatrick, I hear you hanged the last of these rebels yesterday morning.

FITZ.

Yes, sir; the rebellious dog. Under God's

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providence I hanged that rebel, sir. The rebellious dog, sir, he was little better than a common atheist. If we could catch that arch-traitor, Tiger Roche, sir; why honest men, sir, could sleep in peace again.

SAND.

Why, I thought Tiger Roche had died twenty years ago.

FITZ.

That's an instance, sir, of the lengths these rebels go to. It's their subtlety, sir; their canting, lying, hypocritical subtlety. He pretended he was dead, sir. He gave out a report that he was dead, sir. And then, sir, if you please, he lands at Killala with a troop of pikemen. Dead? A crocodile's tears, sir. Twenty years of scheming and plotting; and pretending all the time he was in his grave. [*Staring hard at ROCHE.*] Who's the old put with his arm in a bag?

SIRR.

O, some old put or other. Let's be merry.
[*He rings the bell.*]

[*Enter HOSTESS.*]

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SIRR.

Mine's brandy. What's yours? What's yours, Sandys?

FITZ.

A bottle of brandy, woman. Bring a bottle of brandy.

[HOSTESS *brings bottle and glasses. Then lingers.*]

Well, ma'am. And why don't you go, ma'am?

HOSTESS.

The brandy is half a guinea, sir.

FITZ.

You saucy jade. Hark ye, mistress. I'd have you know, ma'am, that I'm a justice of the peace, ma'am. I shouldn't wonder if you're another of these pernicious atheistical Friends of Ireland, as they call them. Pernicious, lying, murderous dogs.—Well! What are you waiting for?

HOSTESS.

I'm waiting for my money, sir. I don't like to be put upon.

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FITZ.

What? Rebel, would you, against the King's Peace? I am the King's Peace, madam. Not another word, or I'll commit you.

[*Exit* HOSTESS.]

SIRR.

You are a wag, sir. Your are merry.

SAND.

Excellent. Excellent.

[*They draw to the table, unbuckle their belts, put down their swords and papers, and prepare to enjoy themselves.*]

[*To* FITZ.] They say you made a great haul of rebels in Tipperary, about six weeks back.

FITZ.

Under God's providence, I did, sir. I caught seven, sir. I had them all flogged, sir, and then hanged the eldest. Strong measures, sir; but without strong measures we shouldn't sleep in peace, sir. No, sir. If we didn't exert the strong arm, sir—and you will agree with me that might is right—

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there'd be a subversion of all Liberty. But I thank God, sir, that we have a Constitution. Let me hear no cant about Equality and Liberty, and the Rights of Man, sir. Show me a man who talks of Truth, and I will show you a rebel.

SIRR.

Hear, hear.

SAND.

Well, about the rebels. How did you catch them?

FITZ.

Catch them? I saw them in the streets, sir. The effrontery of these rebels knows no bounds, sir.

SAND.

What, with arms in their hands?

FITZ.

Arms in their hands? No, sir. In Tipperary, sir—under God's providence—they know better.

SAND.

Well—but how did you know them?

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FITZ.

Know them, sir? I knew them by their waistcoats, their canting, atheistical, seditious red French waistcoats. There was "Down with Church and State" in every button. Sir, the evidence was plain, sir. Those waistcoats would have condemned a Christian martyr, sir.

ROCHE.

[*Aside.*] It seems they did.

FITZ.

What's the old put there muttering?

SAND.

Ah, don't pay any heed to him. Tell us of the man who didn't take off his hat to you.

SIRR.

Yes, tell us of that. You are a wag, Mr. Fitzpatrick. I'm afraid you're a merry wag, sir.

FITZ.

Sir, your very good health.

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SIRR.

O, sir, your servant, I'm sure.

[*They drink.*]

SAND.

Well, about the man——

FITZ. |

O, yes. The rebellious hound. He didn't take off his hat to me, sir. Well, sir. He that affronts me, sir, affronts King George, sir. For I, sir, under God's providence, am King George's Justice of the Peace, sir; so, sir, when a man does not salute me, he does not salute King George, sir. He is a rebel, sir. A *sans-culotte*, sir. A murdering pike in the hand of a *sans-culotte*, sir. He is a rebel on the face of it. And so, sir, to make a short tale, I gave him fifty lashes. And d'ye know, sir, he had the brazen-faced effrontry to contradict me when I called him a rebel to his teeth. Beat that if you can, sir. What d'ye think of that, sir? Beat it if you can for cold-blooded, brazen-faced, rebellious audacity. These people are possessed of the devil, sir.

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SAND.

Look at my case. Only last week. I had a traitor. He was taken in the fact, as it were. That man Hevey. Why, he was a known traitor. There was no need to try him. The thing was evident. I condemned him to be hanged. Well, he had a mare, a grey mare, a famous creature. I told him to send her round to me. I told him straight out that a mare like her should never again load her loyal loins with the vile burden of a convicted traitor. And he'd the heaven-sent impudence to complain to General Craig.

FITZ.

These people are possessed of the devil, sir. But come, a bumper. A bumper.

SIRR.

[*Aside.*] I think that old put's a rebel. He blushed like fire, Major, when you told your story.

[*They look at ROCHE, who is reading a little book.*]

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FITZ.

What's he reading? These reading people, they're generally deep ones.

SIRR.

[*Peeping.*] It seems to be poetry.

FITZ.

[*Aside.*] Poetry? He is a rebel without doubt. [*Aloud.*] I would make it a capital offence to read poetry. Yes, sir. When a man deliberately starts to poison his mind with incendiary cant about Truth and Beauty, he is as good as damned, sir. I would hang any man who read poetry. A man who has a book of poems in one hand has always a rebel's pike in the other. You mark my words, sir. Ahem! You, sir! You with your arm in the sling.

ROCHE.

You were pleased to speak to me?

FITZ.

Yes, sir, I was pleased, as you call it, to speak to you. Don't trifle with me, sir.

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For I am, under God's providence, a Justice of the King's Peace, King George's deputy, under God's providence, if you know what that means.

ROCHE.

Sir, I know what that means. Yes, sir, I know what that means. Its meaning is written red across this island.

FITZ.

So, sir. I am glad to find you so well affected. Are you an honest man, sir?

ROCHE.

Come, Mr. Fitzpatrick. A man is known by the company he keeps.

SIRR.

You are a wag, sir.

FITZ.

So, sir, I see you know me?

ROCHE.

Not know Mr. Fitzpatrick!

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FITZ.

Why then, sir, you will let me see what book you are reading.

ROCHE.

With pleasure, sir. The Odes of Horace.

SAND.

I know that Odes O'Horace to be a pamphleteering rebel. Mr. Fitzpatrick we must secure this man.

SIRR.

[*Looking at book.*] There's mighty few rebels understands Hebrew, let me tell you that, Sandys.

ROCHE.

[*To Sirr.*] I thought I couldn't be mistaken. Can it be—tell me—Am I not in the presence of Major Sirr, the saviour of this benighted country, the apprehender of that arch-offender, that rebel chief, Sir Peter Keogh? O happy day! A glorious privilege!

FITZ.

Yes, sir, that is Major Sirr, sir. Our

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Saviour under God's providence, Major Sirr, sir. Come, sit down and be merry, Mr.—Mr.—what's your name?

SAND.

All very well, Fitzpatrick. But you and I are of the Commission. Hark! There's the fifes. The regiment's coming. We'd better send him in with the regiment and have him properly examined.

SIRR.

Don't be an ass, Sandys.

FITZ.

Major Sandys, sir. When you are drunk, sir, you are a credit to your King and your religion, sir. But Major Sandys, sir, when you are sober, sir, you are a dry toast, sir. You stick in an honest man's throat, sir. Damme, sir, sit down and drink like a Christian.

SAND.

Well. The regiment's coming. The band are out of tune. These militia are the deuce.

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Well, Mr. Rebel, or Mr. Honest Man, whoever you are, the bottle lies with you.

FITZ.

Give us a toast, Mr. Honest Man.

ROCHE.

Gentlemen, pass up your glasses. I will give you a toast. Hand up your glasses. I will give you a toast.

SIRR.

What is it you're drinking?

ROCHE.

Tokay, Major, a kind of Imperial Tokay.

FITZ.

A man who drinks Tokay, sir, is a man of principle. Did the rebels drink Tokay? No, sir, they drank vile antheistical whisky.

ROCHE.

Come, don't abuse whisky. I've known whisky get a grocer knighted.

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FITZ.

Sir, a King, sir, is above the law, sir.
Come, give us your toast.

SAND.

Yes, give us your toast.

SIRR.

Fill fair, now, honest man.

[ROCHE *lines up the three glasses and fills
them full.*]

FITZ.

Your toast, now.

ROCHE.

Gentlemen, I give you a toast—"The
Trinity of Judas."—There, sir, is yours;
there's yours, Major Sandys; there's yours,
Major SIRR.

[*He flings the glasses one by one into the faces
of the trio.*]

Gentlemen, I am Tiger Roche. I hope
you liked your wine.

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SIRR.

Traitor! Help me, you two. There is a thousand pounds reward.

FITZ.

My religion forbids re—retaliation.

SAND.

[*To ROCHE.*] Well, you bully. The regiment's coming. Then we'll see about Mr. Tiger Roche, with his toasts and his Hebrew.

[*SIRR tries to reach his sword.*]

ROCHE.

[*To SIRR.*] I should be sorry to have your blood upon my sword, Major Sirr.

[*SIRR relapses.*]

[*To SANDYS.*] Now, Mr. Sandys, about your regiment. That is not your regiment. Your regiment is a red ruin at Rathnew. Those fifes are the fifes of the Friends of Ireland. In five minutes' time I hope to be leading them to Dublin.

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ALL.

What! O, God, we are lost!

ROCHE.

Sit down, you carrion.

SIRR.

And I've a wife and two sons.

ROCHE.

What! Human feeling in a Sirr!

FITZ.

O, Mr. Roche, sir; Captain Roche, sir.
Have pity; I am not fit to die.

ROCHE.

Truth from a Fitzpatrick!

SAND.

O, Captain Roche. You shall have the
grey mare. Hevey's famous mare, that won
the trotting match.

ROCHE.

Generosity in a Mr. Major Sandys.

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ALL.

O, Mr. Roche, we'll reform. O, hide us,
Mr. Roche. Not the mob, Mr. Roche.
We shall be torn limb from limb.

ROCHE.

Well, you'd better get up that chimney.

FITZ.

My belly'll never go there.

ROCHE.

Well, it had better go there.

SAND.

It won't hold us all. You must stand out,
Fitzpatrick. Stand by, SIRR. I go first. [*He
gets up the chimney.*]

SIRR.

O God, will I be in time? [*He gets up
the chimney.*]

[*The fifes sound clearly.*]

FITZ.

My belly will bring my grey hairs in sor-

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row to the grave. O you inhuman Sandys.
Help me up. O help me up. I'll squeeze
in somehow. O, Mr. Roche, help me up.
Do now, kind Mr. Roche. O, I shall choke.
[*He gets up the chimney.*] [*An agonized voice
from the chimney.*] Do our legs show?
[*The band sounds without. ROCHE gathers
up their papers in a pile. Then goes to the
window.*]

ROCHE.

Ho, there. Captain!

VOICE WITHOUT.

What d'ye want.

ROCHE.

Bring in a file of men. There are some
rebels secreted here.

[*The troops ground arms and halt. Enter
CAPTAIN and file.*]

CAPTAIN.

Well, sir, where are the rebels?

ROCHE.

Sir, I hold the King's Commission. I

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have traced these rebels here. Five minutes since we were drinking at this table. They are up that chimney. Do your duty.

SOLDIERS.

[*Running to chimney.*] Here's a leg. Here they are all right. Yank them down, sons. We'll give you Killala Bay. We'll give you Erin-go-bragh. In the neck we'll give it to you. [*They pull down three filthy, blinking scarecrows.*]

[*As they wipe the soot from their eyes* ROCHE *indicates them.*]

ROCHE.

This [*pointing to SANDYS*] is Mr. Napper Tandy. This [*pointing to SIRR*] is Captain Tiger Roche. He looks a tiger, I must say. This [*pointing to FITZPATRICK*] is that arch-felon, Mr. Wolfe Tone. Guard them carefully, Captain. They are worth some seven thousand pounds.

ALL THREE.

[*Recognizing the King's uniform through the*

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soot.] Unhand us, Captain. We are the King's Justices. That man there is the rebel. That is Tiger Roche, Captain. We are the King's Justices.

A SOLDIER.

Bleeding fine Justices the King's got, then.

A SOLDIER.

You and your Justices. We'll give you all the justice you need. An ounce of lead is the justice you'll get.

ALL THREE.

Unhand us, will you! Captain! What are you doing? That is the rebel. That is Tiger Roche. Take off your men. We are the King's Justices.

CAPTAIN.

I've heard that song before. Shut your damned seditious heads or I'll make you chew a trooper's cook.

ROCHE.

[*Smiling.*] What in the world's a trooper's cook? Captain.

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CAPTAIN.

It's a piece of wood, sir. It's all the cook a trooper has. Between the teeth, it is an effective gag.

ALL THREE.

But hear us, Captain.

A SOLDIER.

Blimy! Shut your heads. Don't you hear what the Captain tells you?

SAND.

Damn it, Captain. You shall suffer—

FITZ.

If there's justice in Ireland.

A SOLDIER.

There's no justice in Ireland.

SIRR.

But there's law, sir. And you shall have it.

CAPTAIN.

Yes, there's law, and you shall have it. There's man-o'-war law—"over the face and eyes."

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SERGEANT.

Like the cat give the monkey.

ROCHE.

You've secured their hands, sir. They are three desperate felons.

SERGEANT.

Their hands won't give no trouble.

CAPTAIN.

[*To ROCHE.*] Well, sir. What next?

ROCHE.

[*Writing at table.*] O, march them into Dublin—this note will explain—and give them in charge to General Craig.

CAPTAIN.

I presume you will come, too, sir.

ROCHE.

I will follow in a moment. I must place a seal on these papers I have found here.

THE THREE JUSTICES.

That proves it, Captain. He's the rebel.

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He's Tiger Roche. Don't let him stay behind, Captain.

ROCHE.

Captain, remove those babblers. Silence, you felons. Give them the trooper's cook. Stay a moment. Leave a file of men. They can bear witness to my sealing the papers.

CAPTAIN.

I've a reputation to keep up. What! Leave my men in a tavern? No, sir, and I'm obliged to you. The hostess will be witness enough. Forward, my croppy boys. Quick march.

ROCHE.

But you'll have a drink before you go, Captain?

CAPTAIN.

Not in working hours, thank ye. Now, my croppy boys.

THE THREE.

You shall hang for this, Captain.

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CAPTAIN.

There's some I know will hang too. Quick march, I say. [*He nods to ROCHE.*] I'll see you later, at the General's.

ROCHE.

At General Craig's. But I shall probably overtake you on the road.

CAPTAIN.

"We will meet at that beautiful shore."
Quick march, my sons.

[*Exeunt. The troops pass on.*]

[*A pause, during which ROCHE watches them from the window.*]

ROCHE.

Well, the fire's out and the guests are gone. There's only the bill to pay. [*He empties a purse on the table.*]

[*Enter HOSTESS.*]

HOSTESS.

The boat is waiting below, sir.

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ROCHE.

It is good-bye, then.

HOSTESS.

You'll be coming again, sir. There'll be other friends going the same road.

ROCHE.

I shall be too old when they try again.
Good-bye.

Now with his useless steel the beaten rebel goes
To that proud misery's peace no victor ever knows.

Written in 1905.

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pes net

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Masefield

The locked chest



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